

BV

2807

T5A3

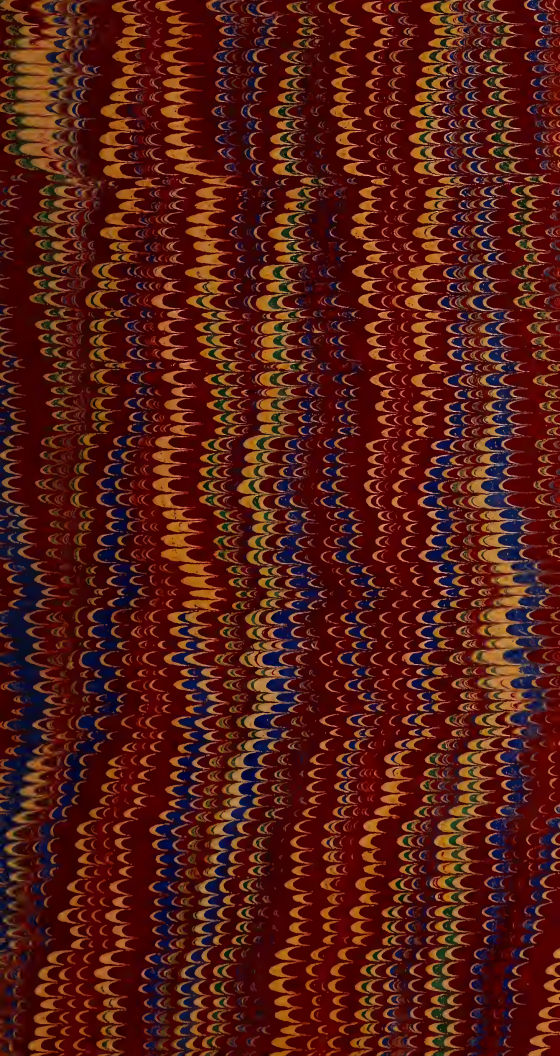
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

BV2807.T5A3

Chap. Copyright No.

Shelf

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.





Geo. N. Thomas.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

OF

ELDER GEORGE N. THOMAS,

MISSIONARY TO THE POOR.



BOSTON:
PRESS OF DELAND AND BARTA,
101 MILK STREET.
1881.

BV 2807

.T5A3

Copyright, 1881,

By George N. Thomas.

THE LIBRARY
OF CONGRESS
—
WASHINGTON

P R E F A C E.

THE following work has been written at the request of a number of my friends, who were desirous to know the events that have been connected thus far with my pilgrimage through life. I have written nothing from prejudice to any people or individuals, but have stated events just as they have transpired, without saying who was in the error, if there was any. It is not probable that my course in life has been without fault ; but if, in any act I have erred, I can say with Paul, that I did it ignorantly, and not from ill-will to any one.

I have tried, through life, to ascertain what God has required of me, and what my duty was ; for I did not wish to run before I was sent, or take a course different from that of others, to make myself notorious in the eyes of men, as

I must answer to God, at the judgment-seat of Christ.

I have been somewhat particular in giving the impressions of my mind, believing that others may have similar exercises, and not know from whence they proceed: hence they feel justified in resisting them, not realizing that they are from God. But in these days men are better taught than they were in my youth. They were then told to resist those feelings; that it was enthusiasm and delusion which produced them. There were religious teachers who did not believe in the new birth, or that it was possible for us to know our sins were forgiven; and who thought that such a declaration was blasphemy, so true is it that —

“Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan his works in vain;
God is his own Interpreter,
And He will make it plain.”

I have, through all my life, labored under great disadvantage, from the want of a proper education. I have never been a day to school since the year 1819, but did attend a few evening schools in the year 1829. Our school-books at

that time were a Primer, Spelling-book, Arithmetic, and Smith's Grammar — which I had but slight chance of studying ; so, if the readers discover many errors, they must exercise that charity which covers a multitude of sins.

GEO. N. THOMAS,

CAMBRIDGEPORT, MASS.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

I was born in the town of Plymouth, county of Plymouth, State of Massachusetts, May 28, 1807. My father's name was Joab, and my mother's, before her marriage, was Lois Doten. They had eight children—four sons and four daughters, whose names were as follows : GEORGE NELSON, NAHUM, LOIS, JOAB, ELIZABETH DOTEN, MARY, MARY, and DANIEL DOTEN. My first sister Mary died when she was one year and three months old. My brother, Daniel Doten, died in infancy. My parents belonged to no church, but respected the Sabbath. My mother was religious, and attended meetings as often as circumstances would permit. We were not allowed to range the fields, or play plays upon the Sabbath, for fear of the warden of the town, whose duty it was to look after Sabbath-breakers, and to maintain order upon the streets. At the age of fourteen years I was sent away to Falmouth, Massachusetts, to work for Capt. David

Lewis, who was a tavern-keeper. The regular line of stages, running between Boston and Falmouth, put up at this tavern. My duty there was to serve Mr. Lewis, in doing general chores about the premises. While at this place thoughts of home would enter my mind, and feeling at times somewhat lonely and sad over the death of my little sister led me to think of a higher and better life. As my thoughts were turned in this direction, I much desired to find some person with whom I could receive some religious instruction ; and upon hearing that there would be held, at a house a few doors from the tavern, a meeting for religious services, under the auspices of the Congregationalists, one evening, I resolved to attend, hoping thereby to gain some further light. The meeting proceeded and ended ; and as no one spoke a word to me, I went out as I came in. After some time these impressions passed away. I returned home to Plymouth, after some ten months' service with Capt. Lewis. After spending a short time there, I was sent to my cousin, Joseph Boylston, at Hanson, where I obtained religious instruction, as he was a deacon of the Baptist denomination, and a very devout man

indeed. I served some four months with him, and returned again to Plymouth. I then went to Middleborough, to make a visit to my uncle, Daniel Doten, and his family. There I did chores for them, until he obtained a place for me to work, which was at the Old Washington Furnace, at Wareham. There I learned to cut nails, by the turning of a plate. While there I learned of meetings of a religious nature, being held near the village, and a number of young men in the same employ, and working near me, resolved to attend in the evening, and I was included with the number. We attended, and listened to a faithful discourse, delivered by Elder Whitten. As soon as he had finished, a lady arose and addressed the people in a very earnest and faithful manner, and appealed to the young men present with me, who were scoffing, laughing, and making light of the service. This served to impress my mind more and more, and I would that I were not in such company. The next day — while by myself, I having a few leisure moments — I resolved then and there to begin a new life. In a short time, my health failing, I returned to my home in Plymouth.

There I retired to my chamber, and taking the Bible to read, meditated, and asked God to show me the way of salvation. After a few weeks at home, I learned of revival meetings being held at Eel River, now called Chiltonville, and I decided to attend them. At the first meeting I felt very much impressed by my condition, from the remarks made by the pastor, Rev. Benj. Whittemore, and also the personal efforts of a young convert, an acquaintance of mine, who asked me what I thought of this subject. I told him I thought well of it, and he asked me if he should offer prayer for me. I answering him in the affirmative, we knelt down together, and he prayed for me. I returned home very much *impressed*, but could not get any relief that day. The following day — it being the day celebrated in remembrance of the landing of the Pilgrims, which was the 22d of December, 1823 — there were services held at the church. And upon this morning I was sent, by my dear mother, upon an errand, and was obliged to pass near the burial place of my ancestors; and having been previously informed that many of them died happy in the Lord, and that, although their bodies

were resting there, their spirits had gone to God who gave them, it caused me to ask myself, Is there any mercy for me? And just at that moment I looked upward, and seemed to see chains of mercy hanging over the town, pointing towards all believers, and one pointing to me; and I asked, Is that for me? when behold! my burden was gone, and my tears dried up. I then inquired of myself, What does all this mean? A voice appeared to answer, "You are given over to hardness of heart, and a reprobate mind, so now give this all up and go back." Then I replied, like those of old, "If I stay here I shall die, and if I go back I shall die; and I can but die if I go on, so I will go on, and die begging for mercy." Now, after completing the errand of this morning, which I was upon, I returned to my mother, and, with her kind permission, hastened to the place of the meeting I had attended the night before, as services were being held there that day. When I arrived I was met by my young friend of the previous evening, who made some inquiries as to my thoughts or intentions, and remarked, "You look different!" I replied, "Surely I do feel different, but cannot

tell what it is," when something said, "You are trying to make it appear to this man that you have got religion, when you have not. You are a hypocrite, surely!" I then replied to this, "If I stay here I shall die. If I go back I shall die. I will press on." In the afternoon of that day a meeting was held at the house of Deacon Morton, which I attended. It was an experience meeting, and when called upon to give my experience, I answered, "I have none to give!" So I remained still in doubt in my mind. In the evening I attended a meeting at the old school-house, and while there was led to think over my past life, and I said, "The Lord has been good to me all my days, and I have no cause for sinning against him. Now it would be just and right should he cast me off forever!" Then the impression came upon me to kneel down and pray to God for mercy; and I cried thrice, "Oh God! be merciful to me, a sinner!" Then the friends around me began singing—

"Oh, how happy are they
 Who their Saviour obey,
 And have laid up their treasure above.
 Tongue can never express
 The sweet comfort and peace
 Of a soul in its earliest love."

My poor heart beat in unison with the sentiment of that hymn. The meeting soon closed, and, as I came out, I looked up and saw the moon so brightly shining that I remarked to my uncle, Isaac Drew, who came home with me, that it must be a new moon, as I had never seen one look like that before: when he replied, "That is the same old moon, but you see it with *new* eyes."

Everything around me appeared to be changed wonderfully, and my heart seemed to leap for joy. Surely "old things had passed away, and all things become new." The heavens seemed to "declare the glory of God." When I reached my father's house, I said to father and mother, "I have found my Saviour. Can I pray here?" and mother said, "Yes." Then I commenced prayer, and prayed that night, and in the morning something said to me, "You feel differently from what you did last night. You have slept your religion all away." Then I dropped on my knees and prayed to the Lord, and He blessed me, and filled my heart with peace and joy, and the same impressions returned. After a few morning and evening prayers at home my father became displeased, and said he "could not have me pray-

ing in the house, as it was, to him, like taking a whipping." So I went outside and prayed. Some neighbors, upon hearing me, reported that "Thomas had turned his boy out-of-doors for praying." This getting to the ears of one of the neighbors, who was going for meat to the market where my father was tending a stall, he accosted a gentleman present with, "I have heard something new this morning. They say that Thomas, here, has turned his boy out-of-doors for praying, which is the last thing I should think a father would turn his boy out-of-doors for." That night, upon father's arrival home, he said to mother, "Tell that boy to come in and pray in the house, as the whipping I get down town is a great deal *worse* than 't is to hear him pray. So let him in." Then I began praying night and morning in the family, with perfect freedom, and God blessed me

The meetings at Chiltonville I attended for a while, until propositions were made about joining the church. I began to inquire of the Lord, and searched the scriptures in regard to baptism; and I found that nothing would satisfy my conscience except baptism by immersion. And when

it became known to the pastor of that church (which was Congregationalist, it being the only church in the place) what my decision was, the pastor stated he could not agree with me; and that, if I wished to be immersed, I must go elsewhere and join. So, in accordance with this, I became acquainted with the Christian denomination, and preparations were accordingly made for my baptism, and acceptance into their church at Plymouth, which took place in May, 1824, by Elder Moses Howe, from New Bedford. Upon it being reported to my father that I was to be baptized by immersion, at the sea-shore, he was greatly opposed, and stated to mother, "*that he would meet me on the shore with a cowhide, and thrash me if I persisted.*" But, at the time of my baptism, instead of my father being present, he was suddenly called away on business, some fifteen or more miles from town. How true these words, that "what man proposes God disposes."

I then left Plymouth and journeyed to New Bedford on foot, I being a poor boy, and called at the house of Rev. Harvey Sullens, which, by his direction, I made my home until he could

find employment for me, which was but a short time after, I being successful in obtaining a situation with Mr. George Brayton, a cooper, apprenticing myself to him for three years. While with Mr. Brayton, at New Bedford, I attended an evening school for two or more months. While attending the school, my *interest in religious matters* somewhat declined, until one day a shopmate came to me, and, placing his hand upon my shoulder, with tears in his eyes, would have spoken, but failed to utter a word. But I understood the deep distress of his mind, for he desired my prayers. I then began to see just where I stood, and I felt unprepared to present his case before the Lord. So I said to him, "Where are you going to-night?" And he, in answering me, said, "Wherever you say." To which I replied, "Then we will go to a band meeting of brethren, who meet to pray, and I will present *your* case, and *mine* also, before them." On the presenting of our cases before these brethren, it awakened such a deep interest in their minds that there was some PRAYING done, and he received peace in believing, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and I received then a fresh baptism of the Holy Ghost,

which has remained a comforter to me these fifty-seven years. At this time I made my vows anew to the Lord, that I would be henceforth his faithful servant. The very next Sabbath, while in attendance at the Christian Church, and listening to the sermon preached by Elder Chas. Morgridge, a passage of scripture came to my mind, which was this: "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light;" which was so impressed upon my mind that I felt it my duty, at the close of the sermon, to arise in my seat and repeat it. I did so, much to the gratification of the older brethren and sisters, who gathered around me. From this a revival began, and some three hundred souls were converted to God—mostly young men. During this time I was in attendance at the Christian Church, and for a year or more was employed by the committee of the church, as its sexton.

While this revival spirit was being manifested in our meetings, I began to think of my home, and my father's *lost condition*—as an unconverted man. And having a message come to me for him, I felt it my duty to go at once

to Plymouth, some thirty-one miles away, and deliver it. But before going, I must get some one to fill my place as sexton, and get Mr. Brayton's permit, I being an apprentice to him. Now I said, "If some one will accept my position cheerfully, for a few days, and my employer will also cheerfully grant the desired permit, I shall take it to be an evidence that it is my duty to go." The first person I spoke to gladly consented to take my place as sexton, and getting the consent of Mr. Brayton, which was very cheerfully given, I started for Plymouth, to see my father. On arriving home, my father soon came into the room, and, appearing surprised at seeing me present, inquired how it was I had so soon returned, it having been but a fortnight since I was at home. I replied thus: "Father, I have come to deliver a message to you, and you must consider what a cross it is for me to so address my father. The first thing to consider is, the great religious privileges of your life, and to take up finally the terrible lamentation, that 'the harvest is past, the summer is ended, and my soul is not saved.'" He appeared very much moved at this, and trembled greatly, and I said, "This is my

message ; let us pray." And he kneeling beside me, I prayed for him. I soon after left him and returned to New Bedford. A day or two after my arrival at New Bedford, I received a letter from my mother, stating that father was under great distress of mind, and that she had called upon several of the clergymen of the town to pray with him. He soon after this found peace. I listened to his testimony, witnessed his baptism, and also his acceptance into the Christian Church. He lived many years, a constant attendant upon the means of grace, and finally passed away, with a smile upon his face, to where I trust he will ever be at rest.

After serving my three years' apprenticeship with Mr. Brayton, at New Bedford, I worked in the shop as a journeyman, for some time ; and during this time (the year 1829) I was united in marriage, at Plymouth, with Miss Lucy, daughter of Capt. Nathaniel and Elizabeth Holmes, and settled in New Bedford. While working at my trade one day, about two months after, I received a serious injury, which unfitted me for further work of that kind. I was therefore compelled to remove to Plymouth. After I had re-located there,

I renewed my religious labors with the Christian Church. For nearly six years I could do no laborious work ; but, after regaining my health somewhat, I engaged to work at my trade, as a cooper, for the Plymouth Whaling Company, Mr. James Bartlett superintendent, this being about the year 1836. After one year's service for this company the business failed, and I engaged myself to the Robbins Cordage Company, Mr. Josiah Robbins superintendent, as its teamster, to transport, by wagon, their cordage from point to point, viz : Plymouth, to New Bedford, Taunton, Fall River, Boston, in Massachusetts, and Warren, Rhode Island.

I worked for the Cordage Company nearly ten years, and during this time many incidents happened, which will, perhaps, interest the reader. During these years there were no railroad facilities between these points and Plymouth. But about the year 1845, the Old Colony Railroad was built between this town and Boston.

I worked for the Cordage Company through the day, and for the dear Lord every night. Wherever I happened to be a meeting had to be held. As at the beginning of my christian expe-

rience, I had strong convictions of mind that I ought to hold public meetings in the name of the Lord. My impressions were such, from time to time, that I could not refrain from making an outward expression to my fellow-men ; and there would come very forcibly to my mind, such passages of scripture as the following : “ Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men,” which may be found in Proverbs, chapter viii., verse 4 ; and another : “ Faithful is He who calleth you, who also will do it.” This may be found in I. Thessalonians, chapter v., and verse 24. From these, and many others, my mind was very much exercised, as to the lost condition of my fellow-men. My first meetings, publicly held, were in the years 1834-5, at South Ponds and Chiltonville. In the years 1835-6 I was called to labor in the north part of the town of Plymouth, where I was greatly blessed in my labors—some twenty or more souls being converted to God, several heads of families among the rich, as well as the poor. While laboring there with this people I was called to visit Wrentham, on some secular business, for a day ; and it being on a Saturday

evening, and being obliged to stop over the Sabbath, I made inquiries for a Christian Church, and was told that about two miles beyond, in West Mansfield, was a church of that denomination. I was called upon, soon after arriving there, by Brother Horace Skinner, who was one of the leading men of that society, and invited to preach to the people, as they were without a pastor. Accepting the invitation, I preached that day, and at the close of the services was asked by Brother Skinner if I would become their pastor. My reply was: "I cannot leave my present field of labor in the north part of the town of Plymouth, as God is wonderfully blessing me there." I returned to Plymouth on the following day, and began my labors with fresh zeal, for the salvation of precious souls. To show, in a moral point of view, that some good had been wrought, I quote a remark made by Supt. B. Spooner, of the Plymouth Cordage Company, which was located in that part of the town, that "the sounds of shot-gun, hammer, and saw, upon the Sabbath day, have ceased." I continued these meetings for some two or more years, and would, in all probability, have con-

tinued them longer, had it not been for a brother of the Methodist denomination, who came among the people, and formed a class-meeting. I was invited by him to join it, but as I could not feel it my duty to do this, and did not wish any disunion, I withdrew, and other fields of labor opened to me.

As my business for the Cordage Company frequently called me to New Bedford, I would attend the evening meetings in that city ; and one incident I wish to relate, in connection with these meetings. It was at a time when Elder Knapp was holding revival services, that a lady, under deep impression of mind, called upon him, and stated to him that her husband, a very set and stern man, opposed her attending these meetings, and that, if she persisted, he would turn her out-of-doors. " Now what am I to do ? " He replied : " Do your duty, and God will take care of you, and your husband also." She accepted this advice, attended to her duty, God blessed her, and she came out a shining light. Returning home, she told her husband that she had found her Saviour, which would make her none the less a faithful wife and mother. He excused the matter for a

time, or until she spoke to him in regard to joining the church, and baptism, when he was thoroughly aroused at that, and strongly threatened her, saying he would surely turn her out-of-doors : " As, standing as well in society as we do, it would disgrace us, and I will not tolerate it." Being perplexed, she again called upon the elder for advice, and he advised her, just the same as before, to " do *your* duty, and God will overrule for you." She was baptised, and returned to her home, and was met by her husband, who acknowledged he was wrong, and that he believed she had acted conscientiously in this matter ; and he desired her forgiveness and asked her prayers, for he felt that he was a miserable sinner. Prayers were offered for him by her, and in the meantime his case was made a special subject of prayer, by the elder and people, that God would overrule for her, and convict and convert him. I was present on the evening that this man, who had been so great a sceptic, came forward to the altar for prayers. He was converted, and I listened to his first testimony for Jesus. He made his confession, and stated how opposed he had been to his wife ; but now could say that

he was a happy man, for he had never known what happiness was before ; and that henceforth he would be found on the Lord's side.

The meetings held at that time, under the charge of Elder Knapp, were a blessing to the people at large. Not only a blessing to his own church, but to other churches around him.

I have previously stated that I was joined in marriage to Miss Lucy Holmes, of Plymouth, in the year 1829 ; and up to the present time, 1881, I have never regretted the step I then took — as she has been a help-meet to me all these years. She has been the mother of seven children, six sons and one daughter, whose names are George Nelson, Nathaniel James, Lucy Mary, James Augustus, Isaac Drew, Luther Baker, Nathaniel Holmes. Nathaniel James lived until he was four months and fourteen days old, when he was taken sick with phlegm stoppage, and died after an illness of two days. Lucy Mary lived until she was nine months and seven days old, when she was taken sick with scarlet fever, and died after an illness of two days. Luther Baker died at birth. Our four remaining children have arrived at manhood. George N. and James A. are

in Boston, Isaac D. is in Cambridgeport, and Nathaniel H. is in Chelsea. Thus our family is scattered. They are all married, and have families. We have been blessed with twenty-five grand-children, fourteen of whom are still living ; and four great-grand-children, three of whom are living at the present time.

I remember nothing of special interest to relate, as taking place between the years 1836 to 1840. In the year 1840, in some parts of the country, the doctrine of the *speedy* coming of Christ was promulgated ; but not until the year 1843 was this doctrine preached in Plymouth, and then by Rev. Wm. Miller, whereby many minds were stirred, and many more there were who believed this. My views upon this subject were very different, as I could not agree with Bro. Miller and others upon the Lord's coming at this time. These passages of scripture impressed my mind very forcibly at times, that "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man," and "Occupy till I come." I was considered to be quite unwise by some — and vexed others — by my remarks upon the subject of "wisdom," with reference to these words, "The wise shall

understand." My view was this: that those who *understood* were those who *departed from evil*; and that the fear of the Lord was the beginning of wisdom, and to depart from evil was understanding, as is expressed by Peter, in the house of Cornelius. "Then Peter opened his mouth and said, of a truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation, he that feareth Him, and *worketh righteousness*, is accepted with Him."

Five years previous to, and including the year 1850, I labored at South Plymouth for the salvation of precious souls — with marked success — holding weekly meetings at that place. While conducting these services I was called to the bedside of a very sick, *irreligious* man, by the name of Brayley, who requested me to pray with him, which I did frequently; resulting finally in his conversion to God, and also the regaining of his health, and becoming an instrument in the Master's hands of leading many of the neighbors around him to love and serve Jesus, his Saviour and Redeemer. A deep religious interest was manifested in this district, and great good was done there.

In the year 1850, Rev. H. L. Hastings came to Plymouth, and labored for some two years and six months with the Christian Church of that town. The Lord wonderfully blessed him in his labors to win souls to Christ, for very many there were who became converted through his ministrations. Why I speak of this is, because Bro. H. and myself worked together for some three months, holding meetings in the southerly part of the town nearly every week ; and nightly were seen seeking souls at the altar. Great interest was manifested by the people, as they would come from miles around to attend these meetings. My friend and brother, Thomas Caswell, at this time renewed his choice to serve God the remainder of his days, and two of his children became converted, accepting his Saviour as their own.

In the spring of the year 1853 I was waited upon by William Thomas, Esq., an influential citizen of the town, in regard to the holding of Sabbath services among the prisoners at the Plymouth County House of Correction. He urged me to begin and continue them every Sabbath as its chaplain, which I consented to

do ; and began such services in the early part of the summer of that year, and continued them each Sabbath morning, and oftentimes in the afternoon, until the autumn of the year 1861, when I ceased to be its chaplain by reason of my removal from that town to the city of Boston. While I was connected with this institution I organized a Bible class, and had the co-operation and valuable assistance of Bro. Justus Harlow, in carrying on these religious exercises among so large a number of prisoners within the walls. I believe the dear Lord blessed me in this labor of love, as an incident in connection with the same will show, which I deem worthy to relate. It happened in this wise. Some years after my arrival in Boston, and while crossing over Boston Common, I was accosted by a young man with the inquiry, "Do you know me, sir?" I replied, "Your countenance looks familiar to me, but I cannot recall to mind where we have met each other." He replied, "Do you remember the House of Correction in Plymouth, Massachusetts? Well, sir, I was an inmate of that institution for a term, and words spoken by you in that prison have made a good impression

upon my mind, for they have followed me continually, and I have been a far different man since my release. I am now leading a better life, and located in business in this city!"

As I have before stated, I removed from Plymouth to Boston in the autumn of the year 1861. The immediate cause of this removal was in consequence of my sons preceding me, locating in business there, and being very desirous that I should reside with them; but a large number of the leading citizens of Old Plymouth wished me to still continue my residence there, and labor with them in the cause of Christ. I thought it my duty to remove, and did so, finding soon after my arrival in Boston a wide field of labor, as I quickly became identified with the Old South prayer-meetings — so called — then being held daily, which were highly interesting. Shortly after my appearance among these brethren, I was appointed as one of a committee of six — of the denominations then represented — to conduct these daily services. So, in this position, I soon became acquainted with a very large number of people of all classes.

I will relate an incident in connection with

these meetings at the Old South, which I think will not be amiss, and will prove interesting and possibly instructive to some dear reader. I became acquainted with a sea-captain's family, comprising a mother and her two children, who had lately been converted to God, while the husband and father was absent at sea upon a long voyage. This man was a very hard man, and a great opposer of all religious matters. On his return to his family, finding that so great a change had taken place in his absence, he was greatly incensed thereby. Soon after I called upon them, and was introduced to him by his wife. After the introduction was over I said to him, "I wish to converse with you upon the subject of religion." To which he replied, "I have heard quite enough of that! I have heard scarce anything else since my return!" and, shaking his fist at me, bade me depart from the house. To which I replied, "Although you will not converse with me upon this subject, you could have no objections to my praying for you?" He answered, "You may pray as much as you please," and immediately left the room. I then said to his wife, "I

presume I must leave now." She answered, "Not until you have offered prayer." I replied, "If I am to offer prayer before I leave this house, I will await the return of the captain," and did so ; and upon his return I thanked him that he had no objections to my praying, but would ask one more favor ; "which is, that I may be allowed to pray in your hearing." He consented, and I knelt down and offered a prayer in his behalf, reminding him of the care of his heavenly Father over him when his ship was wrecked upon a coral reef, and of the timely rescue of seventeen souls in a peculiar manner—namely, the main-top-sail yard jutting over a rock to form a bridge to the main land, and the safe passage of all ; the manner of carrying a sick wife—upon a bed constructed of brush—a distance of seventeen miles, to the nearest habitation ; and also of his safe return home again from another voyage, all showing God's great mercy to him. I prayed, "Now, Lord, touch his heart with the finger of thy love, and lead him to seek thy face." When I had concluded my prayer, and had arisen from my knees, I found he had been *moved* somewhat, and was in tears. I then

left, and for some days after did not see him, being detained at my home in consequence of a bad cold. When I did meet him it was at the Old South prayer-meeting; and upon seeing me he put out his hand and shook mine cordially, and said: "Bro. Thomas, I am a new man; for 'old things have passed away, and all things have become new!'" He very cordially invited me to visit his house, which invitation I accepted, and accompanied him home, greatly rejoicing with him in his conversion to and the acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ as his guide henceforth through life. I had the pleasure many times of listening to his testimony for the Lord, but he soon after removed to Philadelphia.

At about this time there was a revival in progress at the Zion "Bethel" church, on Joy Street, which I had the pleasure of visiting; and in the space of one hour I listened to the testimonies of eighty young converts. An incident in connection with the Old Ladies' Home (colored) on Myrtle Street, I will relate; that of a very aged lady, of about 107 years, who, when I visited the Home on this occasion, stated she

was very glad to have me call upon them, and hold services there with them. It was something unusual for a stranger to do this. These meetings were generally attended by all the old ladies, who would gather in one room ; and all of them would take active part in the services by witnessing for Jesus. Blessed times those were, and it was indeed good to be there ! I attended, also, services with Bro. R. F. Maxwell, at the Old Ladies' Home on Revere Street. Bro. Maxwell was an earnest worker in the cause of Christ, and had charge of the meetings for a long time at these two Homes. Many precious seasons we have enjoyed together in the vineyard of the blessed Master.

An incident I will relate in connection with Father Taylor's Bethel in North Square. It was in this wise. My brother Nahum—who was a sea-captain—had arrived in Boston from a voyage, and invited me to go with him to a meeting at this Bethel. I had never been there, and had not, at that time, learned the way to the place ; so I made an engagement to meet him at the Quincy Market. From some misunderstanding I did not meet my brother there, but through

many inquiries, of different parties, I at last found the Bethel, and entered while the meeting was progressing. When opportunity offered, I arose and addressed the assembly as follows: "With some difficulty I have found what is called Father Taylor's Bethel. I find it to be not only Father Taylor's Bethel, but the Lord's Bethel." To which remark Father Taylor replied, "O yes, brother! He is here—for we know Him!" Continuing my remarks for some few moments I took my seat, and when an opportunity opened I offered prayer. The meeting continued with great interest to the end, and before closing Father Taylor asked if any were present who desired prayers; when an old sea-captain arose and asked prayers for himself, but added: "Mine is a hopeless case! I think that there is *no mercy* for me." Father Taylor, bringing his hands together with a vim, cried out, "Don't say that, captain, for the Lord Jesus is a match for you! Now, brethren, let us pray for this man!" and prayers were offered for the salvation of the captain, who submitted his will to God; and before he left the Bethel he had found peace to his soul, and there was great

rejoicing among the people present. Before leaving, Father Taylor accosted me with, "Who are you, and where did you come from?" I answering him that I came from Old Plymouth, he exclaimed, "What! where the Pilgrims landed?" I answered, "Yes." "Why!" said he; "I didn't know that they raised such cedar down there — *red cedar!"

Soon after locating in Boston, I connected myself with the First Christian Church of that city. I was very cordially received by them, and found many warm-hearted workers in the cause which I so dearly loved — becoming acquainted with the pastor, Rev. Edward Edmands, and Bros. Trafton, Watson, Briggs, Balch, Witherell, and Stratton, whose views were in harmony with mine, "*That CHRISTIAN CHARACTER shall be our test of fellowship, and the BIBLE our rule of FAITH and PRACTICE.*"

A few years after my connection with this church and people, Rev. Bro. A. A. Williams was invited to hold a series of meetings with us, which, I am very happy to say, were crowned

* My hair at that time being of a sandy color, probably called forth this last remark,

with success, as many were converted through his ministrations, and a number quickened in spirit, who had become somewhat cool and indifferent, apparently, to the cause of Christ.

An incident worthy of relation happened in the vestry of this church during my presence at a service held there. A young man, a resident of New York City, missed the train which he had intended to return home upon, and therefore was obliged to wait some two or more hours for the next one to leave the station of the Boston and Albany Railroad. Wandering around up Kneeland Street, he chanced to pass near this vestry while a prayer-meeting was in progress. The congregation were engaged in singing some good pieces, which attracted his attention to such an extent that he said to himself, "As I have no other place to go while waiting for my train, why is not this the spot for me to spend my time in? It is a good place, and the singing very fine; I will go in." He came in, and took a back seat. The meeting was deeply interesting, and the young man was interested as well; for when the pastor, Bro. Edmands, who led the meeting

at this time, before closing asked the question if there was any one present who desired their prayers, and would like to become a Christian — if there was to manifest it by rising up — at this the young man arose and stated the case as I have just related it. That he was a stranger from New York City ; had missed the train and wandered in there, attracted thither by the fine singing ; that he had become deeply interested in the meeting, and would ask the prayers of the Christian brethren. Prayers were offered, he kneeling near the altar, by Bro. Watson and myself, and he broke out in prayer, and while there was converted to the blessed Jesus ! He arose and praised God for his goodness to him. The time arriving for him to take the train for New York, he left us ; but some eighteen months after this he entered the vestry one evening, arose, and asked if any one knew him. He said that he knew us all, and felt it his duty to give in his testimony for the Lord. He related how he had conducted himself since his first visit. That he had returned to New York, entered a church, connected himself therewith, attended Sabbath school, and was at the

time superintendent of that same school, and still going onward in this glorious cause, a happy man. "I would add a word or two in connection with your fine singing. Sing on ! as it was through those sweet notes, that attracted my attention and my presence to these meetings, I can praise God now for his goodness to me, and his keeping power through Jesus, my blessed Redeemer ; and with God's grace ever assisting me, I am determined to fight onward in the good fight of faith, and hope at last to merit the crown awaiting the faithful, and meet you all in the kingdom."

In the year 1866 I became acquainted with Rev. C. D. Bradlee, of Boston, and assisted him in his revival meetings then being held at the Church of the Redeemer, on Concord Street. Bro. Bradlee has proved a firm friend, from my first acquaintance with him up to the present time—willing to assist me in everything for my best welfare. During this year I visited the City Hospital, Boston, and held meetings and distributed many tracts in the name of the Lord.

In the year 1867, at the First Christian Church in Boston, I was ordained as an "evangelist,"

in accordance with the instructions found in St. Mark, chapter xvi., verses 15 and 16. The following clergymen took part in the exercises : Rev. William P. Tilden, of South End Free Church, Boston ; Rev. Edward Edmands, First Christian Church, Boston ; Rev. Daniel P. Pike, First Christian Church, Newburyport ; Rev. Caleb D. Bradlee, Church of the Redeemer, Boston ; Rev. S. B. Cruft, ———, Boston ; Rev. John Williams, Christian Unity, Boston ; Rev. Joseph E. Barry, Childrens' Mission, Boston. Rev. D. P. Pike preached the ordaining sermon, from this text, Rev., chapter i., verse 4 : " Which is, and which was, and which is to come." Rev. C. D. Bradlee offered the ordaining prayer, and the candidate pronounced the benediction.

Since my ordination as a minister of the gospel I have supplied many pulpits, some of which I will name, and incidents therewith connected relate, hoping thereby to not only interest, but possibly to benefit the reader.

At Lynn and Carlisle I supplied a few times, and these meetings were very well attended, and much interest manifested. At Scituate Harbor I held a series of meetings in connection with

the Hanover Street Methodist Episcopal Church Praying Band, a Bro. Prescott being the leading spirit among them, but all were very zealous workers in the cause of Christ. My first inquiry was, Where can I be of the most service? Where can I do the most good for the Master? These questions I asked of a Bro. Elms who lived near the parsonage, and he answered: "I am afraid you will be insulted in your labors of love about here, as I don't know where I could introduce you that you wouldn't be insulted." Bro. Elms accompanied me a short distance, and soon met a sea-captain whom I was introduced to as a missionary who had come down there to do service for the Lord. This man threw up both hands, as though in great surprise, and exclaimed: "A missionary! down here to this town! Why! we are not Hottentots here, man, for I am a Parkerite, and I go to church every Sunday, and pay as I go!"

I went forward, and visited many times the factories, mills, and stores in this place. Meetings were held every evening for a number of weeks, and many were converted; and in connection with these revival meetings I will say,

that at one of them our brother James Chubbuck was converted to God, and at the close of the meeting, with several of the brethren who were to lodge with him that night, returned to his home, and on entering the house began to sing the familiar hymn, "I am glad salvation is free," with a great deal of spirit. This aroused a brother of James, who had retired to his room in the upper part of the house. He arose from his bed, dressed, came down-stairs, and upon entering the room where the brethren were singing, exclaimed, "Is this salvation free for me? Can I have it now? Pray for me!" And upon our prayers being offered in his behalf, and he praying for himself, soon that "peace which passeth all understanding" came to his waiting heart, and he became a rejoicing Christian, and is now an evangelist known by many as an earnest worker in the cause of Christ! I believe that the labors of Bro. Daniel L. Chubbuck, in the Master's vineyard, are crowned with success at every point. May God bless him, is my prayer. One other item I will mention, and that is of a young man who, before he became converted, stated that he was afraid,

if he did, he should be a shouter, and he didn't want to become that. But the night he submitted his will to God, and became a converted man, when the invitation was given out for testimonies in the meeting, this man arose and cried out, "Glory to God! I have found my Saviour, and henceforth I will try to lead a christian life. Hallelujah!"

Another was the case of a very influential young man, a brother, who had become somewhat backward—*prominent in the church, as well as in society*—whom the pastor of his church desired us to see and converse with; stating to us that, if this young man could be prevailed on to make a decided stand for God, it would open the way to a great revival in their midst. Upon our visiting from house to house, conversing and praying with the people, we came to the house of this young man, and entered at once upon the subject of full consecration to God's service. After some conversation with him, without much prospect of success, the two brethren who were with me departed for the village, while I tarried behind, still conversing with him. Before we parted I felt it a duty

to press the matter, and said to him, holding him by the hand, "Now, young man, from the position which you occupy in society, and the influence you exert over those around you, you may be the instrument of great good should you make a movement in this direction. Your pastor believes that others would follow, and that many souls might be saved. Now, sir, will you pledge yourself before me, that you will take a decided stand for God to-day?" He replied, "Mr. Thomas, if I pledge myself to do this, I shall have to preach—nothing less." I exclaimed, "My brother, if that is so, then by all means *preach*, and do God's bidding!" He said, "By the grace of God I will do it!" and at the meeting in the evening he arose, and stated his purpose of becoming henceforward a servant of God. A few evenings after this a class was formed of quite a number of the members present—at the close of the meeting—and they voted to give Brother Bates an exhorter's license; and since that time he has proved himself a faithful servant of God, and is at present a member of the Methodist Conference, in good standing.

At Easton my labors were attended with suc-

cess. I formed a pleasing acquaintance with the pastor, Bro. Washborn, and his family, where I stopped during my visit. I preached one Sunday at Stoughton, and supplied the pulpit several Sabbaths at Taunton, also a Sabbath at Truro. At Woonsocket, Rhode Island, Bro. Prescott and myself visited, finding the church in rather a cold state. We held our first meeting on a Saturday evening, which quite a number attended. On the Sabbath afternoon I filled the pulpit, taking for my subject "PRAYER." Great interest was manifested. In the evening, at the social meeting, some thirty people arose for prayers. The work of the Lord had surely begun ! and, with the help which Bro. Prescott gave, and had sent forward, the work continued, and the church revived and strengthened. And, for a number of years, it continued in that state.

Another incident which I will relate, hoping to benefit some one thereby, happened in my presence one morning, while attending a prayer-meeting held by the Young Men's Christian Association, at their rooms, then located in the old Tremont Temple building, Boston. The services were led on this occasion by a Bro.

Tilden, ex-president of the Association. A young man by the name of Folger entered, became very much interested in the meeting, and near the close, when Bro. Tilden asked the usual question, if there was any one present who desired the prayers of christians, this young man arose, and requested prayers then and there. Bro. Tilden and myself went to his side, and made inquiries of him concerning his spiritual welfare. In reply to our questions, he remarked, "I have had the black flag of rebellion floating at the mast-head long enough; and I now am determined to haul it down, and hoist in its place, forever more, the blood-stained banner of the Lord Jesus Christ!" He desired to give up all for Jesus then. We offered prayer, he submitted his will to God, and before leaving the building he had received that peace of heart which the world cannot give nor take away, and had become a rejoicing Christian. He stated that he was a law student, and was soon to be admitted to the bar. But shortly after this he gave up his law studies, entered the school located on Bromfield street, Boston, to study for the ministry, and after a while received an appointment in New

Hampshire or Vermont to preach the gospel. In time he proved himself a great worker, of the Methodist denomination, uniting a church more closely together, which had had a tendency to be inharmonious in its actions. A revival of religion followed, and a great work was done in the up-building of God's Kingdom. He proved himself true to the cause of the Master; but while yet quite young in years, God called him home from his field of labor.

In the year 1873 I was chosen as one of the committee to lay out camp grounds at Centreville for the Christian denomination. That duty having been performed satisfactorily by this committee, on the first of August of that year our first camp-meeting was held, and it continued for one week. Three preaching services were held daily, forenoon, afternoon, and evening. Prayer-meetings at sunrise, at nine o'clock each morning, and at six o'clock each evening. It now being called the Christian Camp-Meeting Association, they have continued these meetings every year since, in like manner, and been greatly blessed in their efforts to do good. At the present time there is erected upon these grounds fifty or

more cottages, and two large hotels, it becoming a famous resort for travellers and seekers of health. Great improvements are continually being made, many in the past year, 1880. A house for the accommodation of ministers has been erected, which is considered to be a great achievement. The sun-rise prayer-meetings, which have been alluded to, were instigated by myself, and the name given to me, of the sun-rise preacher. Every year, since the formation of the camp, these sun-rise meetings have been held. Also, at all our conferences and conventions, "Father Thomas" opens and conducts these sun-rise prayer-meetings, and has done so for many years back. They have resulted in great spiritual good.

For a number of years past I have been a missionary at large among the poor of Boston and its immediate vicinity, going about doing good wherever I could ; relieving cases of destitution, which came under my care, as far as lay in my power so to do, with God's help. I have visited and assisted very many destitute families. No worthy case has been neglected during all these years by me. For the past seven years I have been a resident of Cambridgeport, and at

one time was employed for the space of three months, by the superintendent of the Sabbath-school connected with the Broadway Baptist Church, to gather in children for this school — children who did not attend any other on the Sabbath. I have visited as many as sixty families in a day, for this object. I have also become acquainted with many good Christian workers of other denominations, attending their several meetings and worshipping with them, being received in all kindness by them. An incident worth relating, and one which will, perhaps, interest the reader somewhat, occurred since my acquaintance with the Methodist people of Cambridgeport. I was offered, and accepted the use of the vestry connected with the Harvard-street church, Rev. Mr. Huntington pastor, on the occasion of my golden wedding, which took place on the evening of the 28th of May, 1879.

The following is copied from the *Old Colony Memorial*, of Plymouth, dated June 5, 1879 :

“The fiftieth anniversary of the wedded life of Rev. George N. Thomas and wife, formerly of Plymouth, was celebrated in Cambridgeport, Massachusetts, on Wednesday even-

ing, the 28th ultimo, in the vestry of the Harvard-street Methodist Episcopal church, over one hundred of their friends being present. The reverend gentleman is everywhere known as 'Father Thomas,' and his duties, those of a city missionary for the past twenty years, in and about Boston, have been richly rewarded. Of puritanic blood, he inherits the generosity and steadfastness which the pilgrim fathers were famous for. His age is seventy-two, and that of his companion seventy-four years. He has four sons, twelve grand-children, and two great-grand-children, all living within a radius of fifty miles. The services were conducted by the Rev. Caleb D. Bradlee, of the Harrison-square Unitarian church, assisted by the Rev. Mr. Manchester, of Providence, Rhode Island, fast friends of the couple. The singing was conducted in a very able manner, by Henry W. Kimball, Esq., of the Boston Young Men's Christian Association, with Miss Martha Wyman, of Cambridgeport, as pianist. Every one joined heartily in it. About fifty dollars, in gold and silver coin, with a sprinkling of greenbacks, were given the happy couple, and their faces glowed with cheer-

fulness. After the singing and praise service, the company were invited to partake of a collation, prepared and presided over by Mr. Thomas' son, Nathaniel H., and wife, which invitation was accepted, and old times were rehearsed to a late hour. Below is given a poem arranged by the Rev. C. D. Bradlee :—

“ Just fifty years ago this day,
Two hearts were joined in one;
They asked their God to guide their way,
Through Jesus Christ, the Son.

“ With truth and peace, with faith and love,
They pledged their life and hand;
And, strengthened by the voice above,
United they did stand.

“ So hour by hour, and year by year
Held up, by mighty grace,
In doubt and joy, in cloud and fear,
They kept a truthful face.

“ Though fifty years have rolled along,
Behold ! the two are here !
Still safe and true, still brave and strong,
And to each other dear.

“ O God, we thank Thee, Thou hast spared
Thy children to this night ;
That they so long Thy love have shared
And found their lives so bright.

“ Still keep them in Thy holy care,
Still bless their hearts with peace.
And oh ! for bliss their souls prepare,
When earthly times shall cease.”

The *Memorial* also gives an account of a family reunion which was held in Plymouth in the fall of the year 1878, which I will copy as follows :

“FAMILY REUNION.

“A family gathering of a very interesting nature, was held at the residence of Mr. Nelson Holmes, on Tuesday evening, October 22d.

“Three brothers and three sisters, children of the late Joab and Lois Thomas, met with a number of the neighbors, and celebrated the event by religious services, under the lead of the elder brother, George Nelson Thomas, of Boston, a city missionary, familiarly known in the marketmen’s meetings as Father Thomas. The united ages of the brothers and sisters is 387 years, Father Thomas being nearly seventy-two years old. All are members of churches, and on this occasion enjoyed a season of much spiritual and fraternal refreshment.”

An incident I will relate of “trusting in the word of God” will interest the reader. One morning I left my home in Cambridgeport with but thirty-two cents in my pocket, and my wife had requested me to buy some groceries, and

bring home. Upon reaching the city I was accosted by two Christian men. One I had assisted with funds a few days before, and he now, upon seeing me, introduced me to his companion, who was a neighbor of his, and had left home that morning without food in the house. He had a wife and three children to care for, and had had no work for a fortnight. It was a worthy case ; I felt that it was true ; and, with the pangs of hunger upon the poor fellow, what could I do but put my hand into my pocket? Taking out twenty cents I passed it to him, telling him to buy himself and family some food. Passing on my way, a thought crossed my mind that I had acted unwisely, in giving away money which I needed myself to buy groceries for my home ; but this passage of scripture immediately after came to my mind : " Trust in the Lord and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." I said *Amen!* to that, and soon after called at the Young Men's Christian Association, corner of Tremont and Eliot Streets, Boston, which I am accustomed to visit quite frequently. Sometimes my mail-matter is addressed to the care of the Association, and was

at this time, as will be seen. As I entered the room the assistant secretary spoke to me, saying, "Father Thomas, here is a letter for you;" and handing it to me, requested me to take a seat in the office to read it. Upon opening the letter, out dropped a five dollar bill! My heart was filled with gratitude, my eyes with tears, and I could but say Amen! How good the Lord was to me, as, by trusting in God, verily I should be fed.

Another incident worthy of record is that of a poor widow, who was a prey to consumption, and very destitute. I was requested to visit at a miserable hovel on Federal Street, in Boston. Entering, I found the poor woman sick with consumption, as had been represented to me, and burdened with the care of one child, a little boy about seven years of age, sick with scrofula. I took the case in hand at once, and did my best to alleviate their sufferings by first calling upon Supt. Cutler, of the City Hospital, whom I was acquainted with intimately, and stating to him that I was desirous of this boy's admittance to the hospital for treatment. The proper permit was obtained, and the boy admitted. He re-

mained in the hospital for some twelve months, under treatment which proved somewhat successful, and at the end of that time he came out, and I placed him in charge of Dr. Cullis, at the Children's Home, then in Willard Street, Boston. For the mother, during this time, I had obtained a place at the Consumptives' Home, in charge of Dr. Cullis ; she there receiving proper care, and likewise free medicines, for the space of three weeks or more, when she became rather dissatisfied with the treatment received, desiring to return to her former abode, for the reason that she could get *her allowance of WHISKEY daily*, which would not be permitted at the Consumptives' Home ; and she left this institution rather abruptly. She returned to her old abode, and after some months' lingering in this miserable, filthy place, she died. An uncle, who had arrived in Boston, on a visit from California, left the means to provide a proper burial for her, and returned before her decease.

The mother dying, it left the boy in the care of his grandfather, a dissipated old man, whom the child disliked very much as a guardian ; and he had no desire to return to him. The time

having come when some action must be taken as to the proper course to pursue, and I myself being very much interested in the welfare of the lad, I decided to adopt him if I could do so. And so, calling upon the old man, the boy's grandfather, one day, I asked if I might have the boy to adopt as my own, and he replied: "I would rather you had him than any other man! and if you will get me a New Testament, with the Psalms therein, and an Episcopal prayer-book, you may take him;" adding further, that he had resolved to become a better man, and lead a different life. I told him he should have the articles desired at once, and I set about procuring them for him. I went to St. Stephen's Home, then on Purchase Street, in Boston, in charge of Rev. E. M. P. Wells, and was ushered into the presence of that old gentleman. When entering the Home, my eyes met this motto: "*Jesus Christ is Master of this House.*" Rev. Bro. Wells inquired my business, and, informing him that I had come to him, a stranger though I was, to procure the afore-mentioned books for a man who had a purpose to reform, he replied that I should have them; at the same time plac-

ing in my hand the required books, also a large number of cards, on which was printed :

“ If any person is in need of a meal, and has no money to pay for it, send him to my Home.

“ If any person is in need of a night’s lodging, and has no money to pay for it, send him to my Home.

“ If any person out of work wants to find some employment, and has been unsuccessful, send him to my Home.

“ Any person or family found destitute send to me.”

I saw at once that that motto was of a truth properly placed, for *Jesus Christ was surely Master of that house*. And I have witnessed, on many cold winter mornings since, a line of poor men, thirty or more in number, filing into this Home for their breakfasts.

After leaving the Home I proceeded to the house of the grandfather, and presented him with the books ; and, as I had provided myself with the legal papers for adopting the boy, I at this time obtained his signature, giving up all claim upon the child. I left him in good-humor, and some two years after this old man passed away.

The boy is living at the present time, and is quite a young man ; in the employ of Dr. Cullis, at his Home in Grove Hall, Dorchester.

In after years this brother, Rev. Mr. Wells, was a good old friend to me, and continued so from the first to the last, he passing to his rest about two years ago.

As has been stated, I am pretty well known at the marketmen's noon-day prayer-meetings, which are held daily in Boston, between the hours of twelve and one o'clock, at No. 53 Blackstone, corner of North Street. I am about to relate some incidents connected therewith. It has been my privilege several times to conduct them — with the help of the Lord — and I have witnessed great good done there, and received spiritual benefit myself. These daily prayer-meetings have been continued for the past four years, with some grand results. Upwards of a hundred persons, both male and female, have been converted, and many of them are active workers in the cause of the Master at the present time. One of these meetings was led by the Rev. G. F. Pentecost, who made the subject of his talk the sixth verse of the second chapter of I. Peter, combined

with the sixteenth verse of the twentieth-eighth chapter of Isaiah, showing Christ not only a foundation but a precious corner-stone, and the necessity of a soul being built upon this stone. This thought was made the spirit of the meeting, especially by Mrs. Thomas, in describing a vision of heaven she saw when she was, at one time, on the border between life and death ; and by a Swedish girl, picturing the fervent love of Christ going out to her wretched soul, with pardoning mercy. At this meeting Mr. Stebbins led the singing, and presided at the organ.

The Rev. Mr. Pratt, an evangelist, led a series of these meetings in the winter of 1879-80, and they were highly interesting and of power. He was assisted in his labors by Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, who conducted the singing, which was always spirited and pleasing to all. One of these meetings, held in December, my youngest son attended. Now father and mother — as well as very many of their Christian friends — had been praying for the conversion of this son for these many years, without their prayers being answered until this day. At the close of the meeting, as the assembly was passing out, my son was

accosted by an active worker in the cause — of whom I will speak further on — and, after considerable conversation upon the subject of his spiritual welfare, he made a decision to submit his will to God, and did so then and there, for many prayers were offered in his behalf, he crying out, “God be merciful to me, a sinner !” “Give me a clean heart, O God, and renew within me a right spirit !” seeking for light as commanded, and at last finding that peace and joy there is to the believing heart, which the world knows not of — and can neither give nor take away ! Praise his holy name ! Jesus heard and answered his supplications ! He became a new man, for “old things” did pass away, “and all things became new.” “For whereas he was once blind, he then saw ;” and he is at the present time a rejoicing, happy Christian, with a determination — God’s grace assisting him — to hold fast to the end. Now the sequel to this conversion is this ; I believe it with all faith. On the day before my son visited this meeting, his mother had pleaded his case on her knees at her bedside, praying that the Lord would convict and convert him, if he entered such a meeting.

When she arose from her knees she felt that her prayer was answered ; and when, upon the next day, she heard the glad news of her son's conversion, she said : " I knew it ! for I received the evidence yesterday that my prayer was not in vain ; and I am thankful to my Saviour for his loving kindness to me."

So it is true that " the prayers of the righteous availeth much." And we shall continue our prayers in behalf of our three remaining sons, hoping that our supplications will not be in vain in their cases, and that *all*, as *one* family, will at last meet around the mercy seat, to love and praise God forever and ever.

The brother whom I have just referred to was an expressman by occupation, and at one time what is termed " a hard boy," addicted to the use of strong drinks, and with other evil habits as well ; but he was converted to God at one of these meetings, and became a great worker for the Master, wherever he was. He is at the present time out in the far West, preaching the gospel, and meeting with great success in the work ; and may the dear Lord bless the efforts of this good brother, Rev. A. A. Wilcox, and

guide and direct him by His grace and counsel through life, giving him many souls ; and at last bring him to the better land, where a *crown of stars* will be in waiting for him, is my humble prayer to God.

I will say, in my concluding remarks upon these meetings, if the reader has not visited them it would be worth the time spent in doing so, and he would receive great benefit therefrom.

This question presented itself to me a short time ago : What good have I ever done in the world ? Have I been trying to do my duty, to the best of my ability, or otherwise ? The answer came to me in this manner : “ Have you forgotten the letter received by you some years ago, from a gentleman in Iowa, who wrote you that, at one time, when in the streets of the city of New Bedford, you accosted him, and conversed with him upon the subject of religion ; and that some time after this he became converted to the Lord Jesus, located himself in business in the West, and sent you this information, thanking you for your interest in him, and saying that he had two farms in the state of Iowa, situated upon what is known as Skunk River ; and, if Bro. Thomas

would come out there and engage in the religious work with him, he would make him a present of one of them?" I answered, "No; I remember that offer." So I have been the instrument in God's hands, of doing a little good in my day, and hope to do still more.



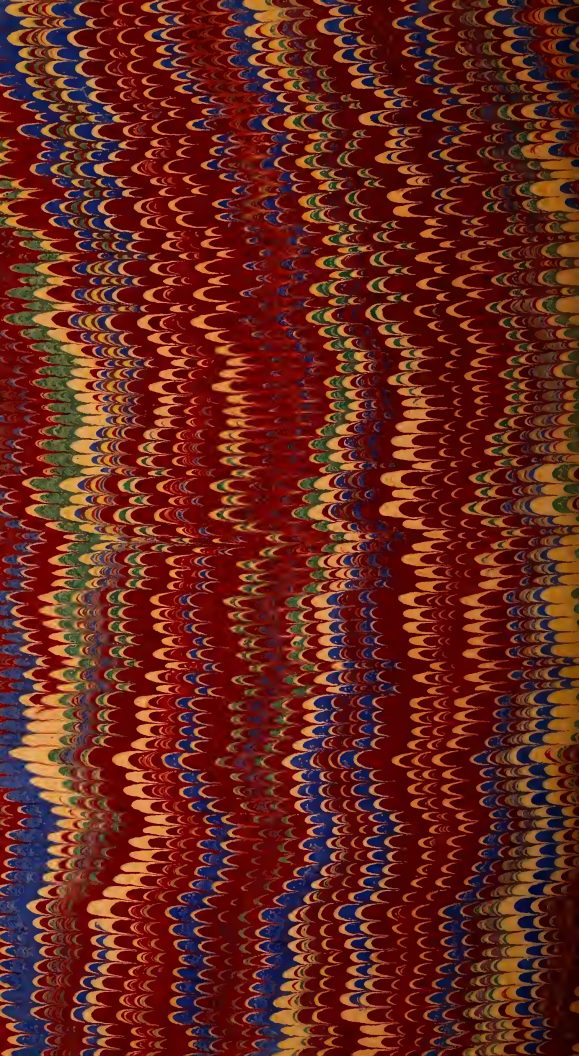
AUTOBIOGRAPHY

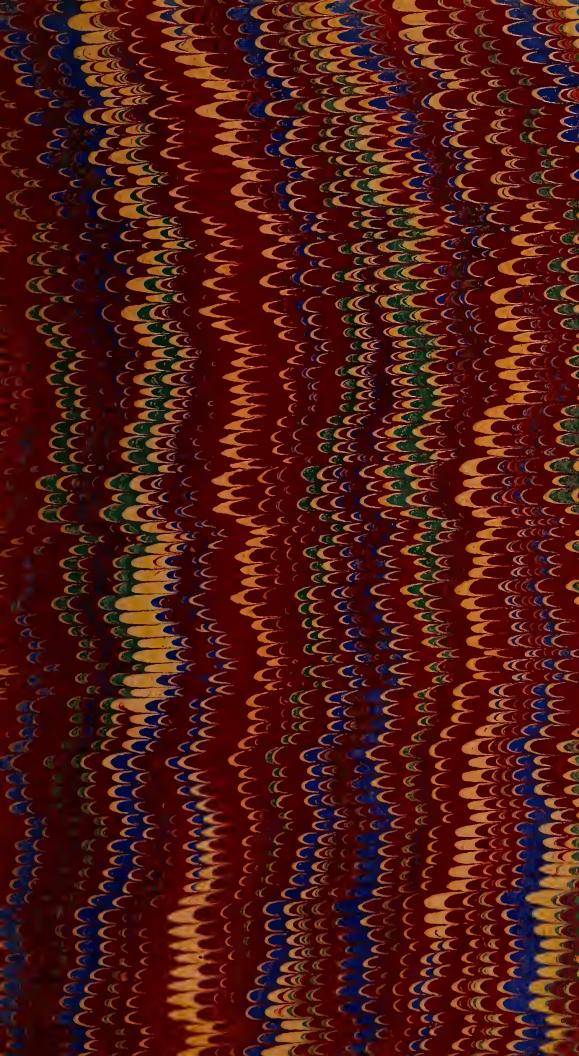
OF

ELDER GEORGE N. THOMAS,

MISSIONARY TO THE POOR.

BOSTON:
PRESS OF DELAND AND BARTA,
101 MILK STREET.
1881.





LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 022 171 552 4